

Discerning God's Will in Managing Money Through Your Relationship with Christ

Session #4a - Challenges to Discerning God's Will & a Tough Case study **PARTICIPANT'S copy**

Webinar Winter 2021

Presentation by: Thomas R. Copland, CPA, CA

I. Key Biblical Principle

- ▶ **There are many challenges that Christians can face in discerning God's will in managing money.**
- ▶ **Some of those challenges are from the flesh [e.g. ungodly attitudes of selfishness, covetousness greed or lack of contentment] and some of them are from the enemy Satan who is the father of lies [[John 8:44](#)] who is trying to deceive people into managing money in a way that is contrary to God's word and God's will.**
- ▶ **Managing money the world's way can destroy your finances, your health and your marriage.**

Challenges to Discerning God's Will

1. Busyness & distractions are the most common hindrances for Christians in developing a close relationship with the Lord and in discerning God's will in making financial decisions.

In **Luke 10:40-42**, Mary was carefully listening to the Lord, but Martha was distracted from listening because she was “busy”. Martha asked Jesus to have her sister help her, but Jesus replied: *“Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things, but only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part [i.e. listening to the Lord] which shall not be taken away from her.”*

If you are always busy, how can you sense "God's gentle whisper" [**1 Kings 19**] or "hear" Jesus' voice [**John 10:27**]?

In order to discern God's will, have a regular "quiet time" with the Lord in prayer, reading His Word and developing your relationship with God.

Challenges to Discerning God's Will

2. Sin - in Psalm 66:18, David said: *"If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened;"*

Isaiah 59:1, 2 says: *"Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear."*

Sin acts like a "roadblock" to discerning God's will.

Common sins related to finances include selfishness, greed, covetousness, pride, lack of contentment, dishonesty etc.

Dealing with Sin – suggested solution

Confess any sin to the Lord & repent of it.

1 John 1:9 says: ***“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”***

Regularly pray & ask God to reveal to you any sin in your life. Follow David's example:

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” [Psalms 139:23, 24].

Challenges to Discerning God's Will

3. We have not learned how to listen to God.

- ▶ **Jesus said: "*He who has ears to hear, let him hear.*"**
In this regard Jesus was referring to “spiritual ears” in our hearts. This is why God can speak to us without using an audible voice: he is speaking to us in the spiritual realm.
- ▶ **Jesus said: “I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen.... They too will listen to my voice”...[[John 10:14-16](#)].**

Learn to Listen to God

- ▶ When most Christians pray, they list out their prayer requests, asking God to fulfill their needs and desires. However, the most important aspect of prayer, is listening to God in order to discern God's wisdom [James 1:5] and God's specific will [Ephesians 5:15-17], which is unequivocally the best choice!
- ▶ [see session #3 for more biblical guidelines on how to learn to listen to God.]

4. Obedience to God is critical

Once you have discerned God's Will, then be sure to obey God -i.e. to whatever God wants you to do and when God wants you to do it [**James 1:22**].

Joshua made the appropriate commitment:

“But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD” [**Joshua 24:15**].

So, once we discern God's will, we must be willing to do it. And even if it's outside your comfort zone, God promised: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." [**2 Corinthians 12:9**].

5. Trust God for the Results

Once you have discerned and obeyed God's will, you can trust God for the results. [Proverbs 3:5, 6].

Sometimes when we discern and obey God's instructions, things may not work out as we expected. Moses went to Pharaoh several times asking Pharaoh to "let my people go". Initially Pharaoh denied the request and increased the work burden on the Israelites. At first, it appeared that God was not honoring Moses' obedience. However, in His time, God performed several incredible miracles that allowed the Israelites to be freed from slavery and to cross the Red Sea on dry land!

- ▶ As Dr. Charles Stanley puts it- "Obey God and leave all the consequences to Him".**

Question: Can you think of any other challenges to discerning God's will and developing your relationship with the Lord? Write them below and on the next slide.

Other challenges to discerning God's will

What do you find is your biggest challenge to discerning God's will? Write your answer below with some ideas on how you can deal with that challenge.

Ideas to deal with the challenges that you have in discerning God's will.

Case study #1- Spender married to Saver

- ▶ **“Spender” and “Saver” are married. Saver manages money God’s way including saving for future needs [Proverbs 21:20], but unfortunately Spender manages money the world’s way. When they renewed their mortgage last year, the bank performed their normal credit checks and it was revealed that spender had accumulated significant debt on credit cards, that Saver was not aware of and the bank turned them down so they had to obtain private financing at a much higher cost.**
- ▶ **Although they have sufficient income to live a middle-class lifestyle, “Spender” spends their money faster than “Saver” can save the money. As a result, over the last several years, Spender has accumulated significant debt for them as a couple and spender has a bad credit rating resulting in higher interest charges.**

- ▶ **Saver has spoke to Spender many times regarding his/her excess spending and explained the financial problems that it is causing. Threats from creditors are becoming common and it is creating incredible stress on their marriage relationship.**
- ▶ **Saver can see that, that if this continues, it's just a matter of time before the bank forecloses on their home or one or both of their automobiles are repossessed, and if it still continues, they will likely be forced into bankruptcy.**

- ▶ **Notwithstanding, Spender ignores the advice and continues acquiring numerous material things that they do not need [on credit cards or the line of credit] and is unwilling to learn how to manage money God's way.**
- ▶ **[Tom's comments- unfortunately, this case study represents a very common situation that I see very often].**

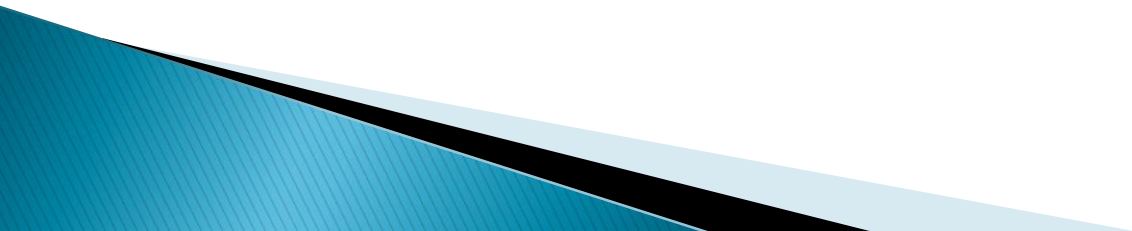
Question #1 –how would you feel if your spouse accumulated significant debts without your knowledge?

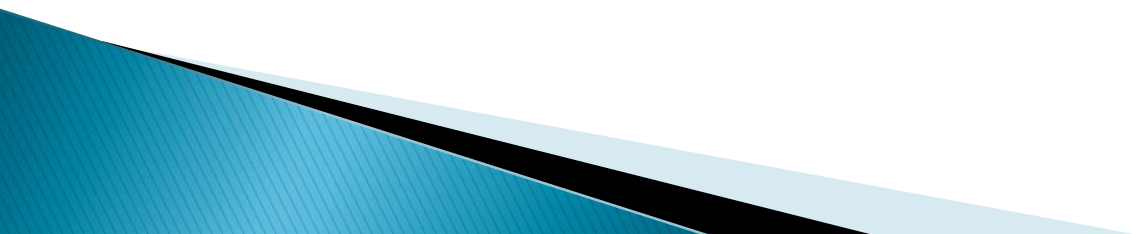
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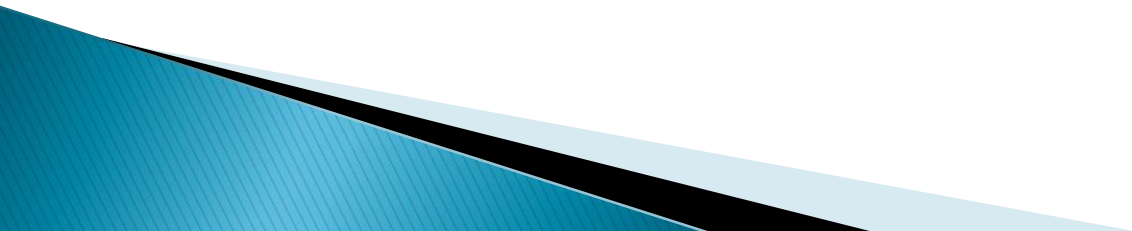
Question #2 -what should Saver do? Suggest some steps to follow, proceeding from one step to the next, if the spender continues to refuse to cut back on his/her's unnecessary spending and accumulation of debts. Provide a reference to Scripture for each point.

Question-what should the saver do? Write your answer below and provide a reference to Scripture if you can.

Question-what should the saver do?









- ▶ ***“ A prudent man sees danger and takes refuge, but the simple keep going and suffer for it.” [Proverbs 22:3]***
- ▶ **It's better to address the problem rather than wait until you lose your home or are forced into personal bankruptcy, which most of the time will result in separation and divorce. We are trying to avoid this.**

Assuming Spender continues to spend unnecessarily, is there anything else Saver could do? Pray about it and let's discuss.

Here's a few more ideas if Spender continues to squander money.

Question-what impact do you think Spender's excessive spending and accumulation of debt could have on his/her children? Write your answer below and on the next slide.

- ▶ **Question-what impact do you think Spender's excessive spending and accumulation of debt could have on his/her children?**

Other tough cases

- ▶ Tom to share some of the other numerous tough cases that he is seen, where the mismanagement of money results not only in financial problems, but affects many other areas of one's life. These include:

1. Today many employers do a credit check on potential employees so bad credit rating can severely restrict one's employment opportunities & promotions within the company.

2. Bad credit is a bad testimony for Christian who is supposed to be on “light into a world of darkness”[[Matthew 5:14-16](#)].

3. Managing money the world's way and accumulating debt will often cause Spender to go to friends and family members for loans [which are rarely repaid], or to cosign on loans.

4. Some of those friends may be fellow church members, creating tension at church and negatively affecting the ministry the of church.

5. If someone cosigns on a loan for Spender and the loan is not repaid on time, the bank will legally demand that the cosigner pay the loan and almost always the relationship will be “soured” and the cosigner is “hurt financially”.

Proverbs 22:25, 26 says: “*Don't guarantee to pay someone else's debt. If you don't have the money, you might lose your bed.*” [CEV].

Memory verses

- ▶ Psalm 66:18, David said: *"If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened;"*
- ▶ *"The Lord answered, "Martha, Martha! You are worried and upset about so many things, but only one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen what is best, and it will not be taken away from her."*[[Luke 10:41-42 CEV](#)].
- ▶ What was best? It was listening to the Lord!

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Session #4b - Tough Case Studies

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Mismanagement of money will often affect other areas

Since 1982 I've seen thousands of cases where what started out as a financial problem, [because either one spouse or both spouses were spending too much and accumulating debt], became a much bigger problem, spreading like a disease through the family and negatively impacted many areas such as:

1. -the emotional intimacy of a marriage deteriorating.
2. -the physical intimacy of a marriage deteriorating and over time becoming nonexistent [[Genesis 2:24](#)].
3. -anger and bitterness accumulating between husband-and-wife [[Ephesians 4:26, 27](#)].
4. -stress & “sleepless nights” resulting in health problems.

4. **Children feeling stressed and insecure and developing a non-biblical perspective on finances.**
5. **Proverbs 22:6** says: “train a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it”. When parents display “bad financial habits”, often the children follow their parents lead and it is passed to the next generation –i.e. the grandkids.
6. **Ongoing financial problems can “open the door” for Satan to destroy the family. 1 Peter 5:8** says: “*Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.*””

- 7. Bankruptcy or nonpayment of one's debts, negatively impacts the Christian's testimony [Matthew 5:14-16] and makes the children and spouse feel very insecure and anxious about money.**
- 8. And if the underlying financial problems are not dealt with, often separation and divorce is the result.**
- 9. This is so sad, and so unnecessary, because if both husband and wife would just learn and manage money God's way, finances would be an area of peace in their relationship and restoration of the intimacy of their marriage relationship.**

Remember statistically, when couples separate or divorce, 70% to 80% of the time they acknowledge that finances was the number one area they argued about. Generally speaking there is enough money, but one or both spouses are managing money the world's way, and not God's way.

Therefore, to increase the probabilities of a successful marriage, learn and manage money according to God's principles and God's specific will [[Luke 22:42](#)].

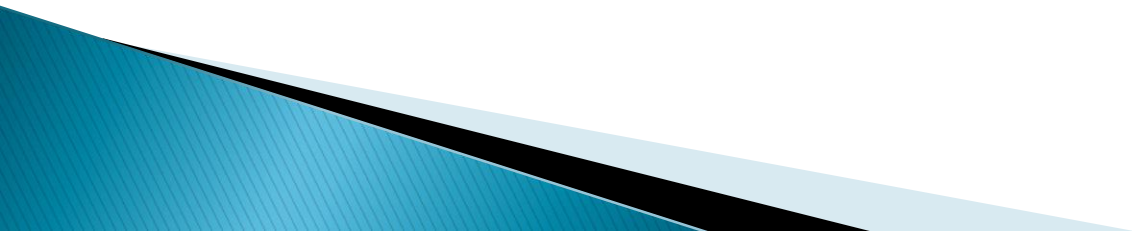
I have had the privilege of seeing many marriage relationships healed just from giving biblically based financial counseling - examples.

Case study #1- single mom with limited income.

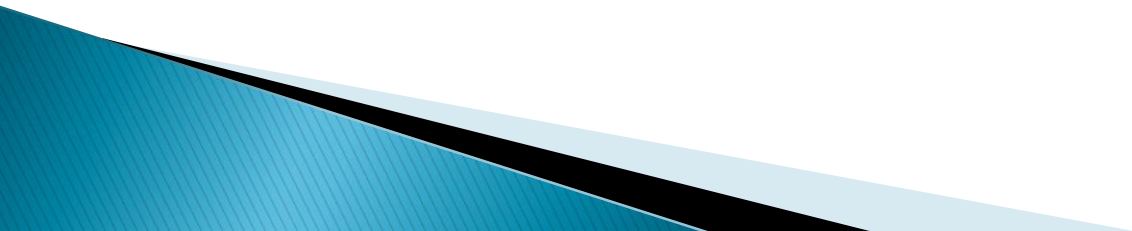
- ▶ **Judy, a single mother, has two children. She works part-time and has a modest income. Unfortunately, her ex-husband is not paying the required child support and alimony and as a result she has been forced to incurred debts to pay for basic needs for her kids. She is getting really worried as she sees no way to repay these debts, as she doesn't have sufficient income to pay even her regular expenses.**
- ▶ **Question-what biblically-based financial advice would you give her? Write your answer on the following blank slides and provide a reference to Scripture if you can.**

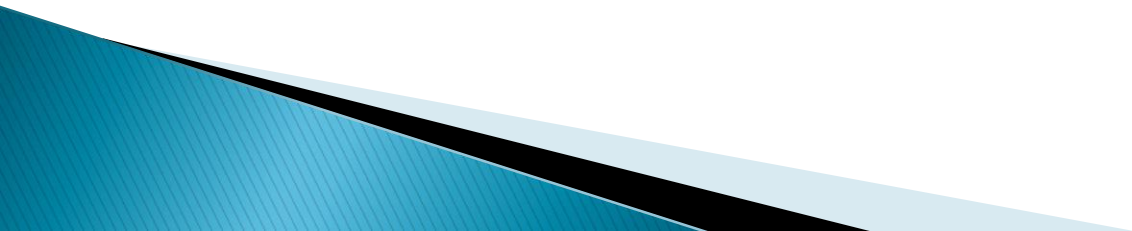
Case study #8- single mom with limited income. Question-what biblically-based financial advice would you give her? Write your answer below.

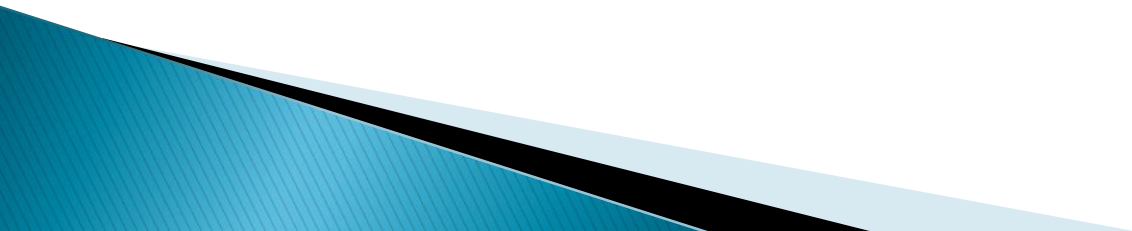
Case study #8- single mom with limited income. Question-what biblically-based financial advice would you give her? Write your answer below.











Case study #2- Christian money manager married to a spouse who makes an unrealistic unilateral decision.

- ▶ **Husband-and-wife are married with two children. In this case study, the wife manages money according to biblical financial principles with a balanced perspective between spending and saving while the husband struggles in this area.**
- ▶ **The husband has had the higher income and for the past 20 years of their marriage and he regularly deposited his paycheque into the joint chequing account. Since his wife was the better money manager, he asked his wife to manage the money and pay the bills since getting married.**
- ▶ **Management of their finances was working fine, until recently when the husband decided [without consulting his wife], to deposit his net salary into a personal chequing account solely in his name and with him as the only signing authority.**

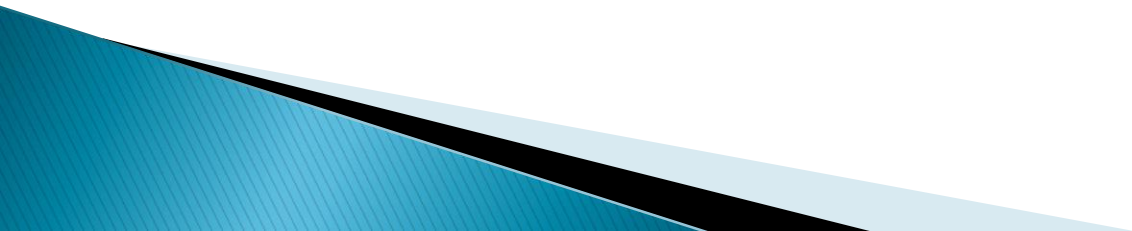
- ▶ The wife was very upset about her husband's unilateral decision to keep most of his pay. The wife asked her husband why he has made such a decision.
- ▶ The husband responded indicating that he will pay the only the rent and he will use the surplus for retirement savings and paying down a personal family debt.
- ▶ The wife prepares a budget and quickly determines that her part-time income is not sufficient to cover all of the other expenses. She becomes angry with her husband for making such a ridiculous decision and she feels deserted.
- ▶ She waits until she is calm, and she speaks to her husband and shows him the budget and demonstrates clearly that her part-time income is not sufficient to pay the rest of the bills. He ignores the facts and tells her to figure out a solution, and he confirms his decision to do as he plans.

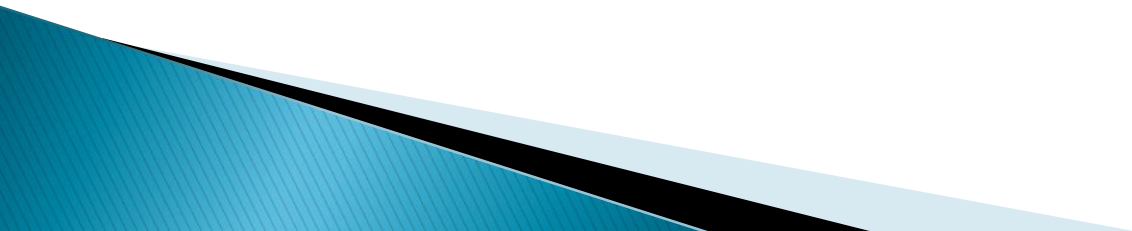
Question- take some time to pray, and then please write down below the biblical steps, in an appropriate order, that you believe the wife should take in order to deal with this situation. Provide a reference to scripture for each suggestion.

Question-what should the wife do?

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Question-what should the wife do?





In this case, if the husband still refuses to change, even after the leaders of his church have counseled him [or tried to counsel him], is there anything else the wife could do? Pray about it and write your answer below.

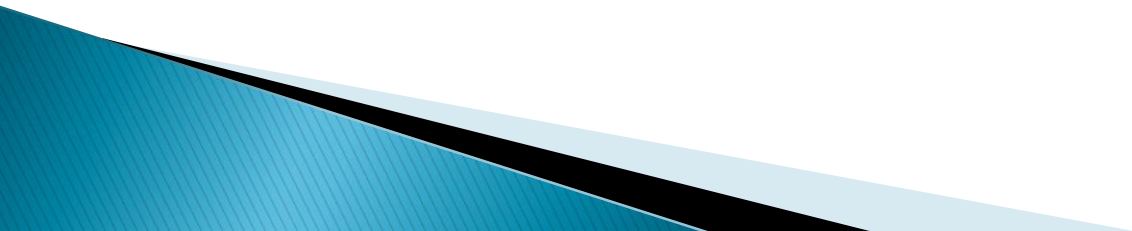
Question: What will likely be medium and long-term implications to their finances [and their relationship], if the wife does nothing?

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Tom's Conclusion- in difficult situations, it is sometimes necessary to exercise “tough love”, when it is clear that the spouse is unwilling to change.

Case Study #3 -The participants to provide some tough real-life cases that they have seen for discerning God's will in managing money. Write them below and on the next two slides with some suggested solutions.

Case study #3 -The participants to provide some tough real-life cases that they have seen for discerning God's will in managing money.



Memory verses

- ▶ ***“Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour” [1 Peter 5:8].***
- ▶ ***“If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt,” [James 1:5, 6].***
- ▶ ***In Psalms 32:8 God said: “I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go, I will counsel you and watch over you”.***

Next week is session #4 of the five sessions series in the topics next week are:

1. Additional tough case studies &

2. Summary of the series.

This week Darlene should send you the suggested solutions for the questions for this weeks case studies and of course she will send you a link before the next webinar.

Tom to close in prayer.